

Natural Resource Protection News

From the Town of Canandaigua Environmental Conservation Board

A Sorrowful Farewell to Ash Trees

By: Edith Davey

If you hear the sound of chain saws working in Town of Canandaigua parks and along roadsides, be aware that work crews are removing ash trees out of concern for your safety. The hazards of dead ash trees falling in the parks or onto roads are too great to ignore.

Ash trees comprise a great deal of the canopy of local areas, as many were planted to replace the elm trees that died from Dutch elm disease. Ash trees all over New York State are dead or dying or struggling to stay alive as a result of infestation by the invasive species, [emerald ash borer](#) (EAB) (*Agrilus planipennis*).



The EAB is an invasive beetle from Asia that attacks all species of native ash trees, (green, white, black and blue ash) found in New York. Individual adult borers are small green insects (see image above-right of an adult EAB on a penny) that dig into the tree to deposit eggs. Larvae then hatch and burrow under the bark (see below-left), consuming cambium. Trees usually die within 2-4 years of the start of infestation. Crown die back and yellowing or browning of the leaves are common indications of infestation. Woodpecker activity may increase as the birds feed on the insects (follow this [link](#) for more on signs and symptoms of infestation).

While there are some treatments (e.g. compounds based on Neem tree sap) available to prolong the life of an infested ash tree, these must be injected by drilling into the trunk of the tree. The treatments must be repeated periodically. Clearly, the scale of effort and expense required to treat every ash tree on Town property would be impractical.

Woody debris and firewood from clearing the ash trees may be restricted in movement as it may harbor live EAB eggs or larvae. Movement of EAB across New York has been directly traced to ash firewood or ash nursery stock, according to NYS DEC. There is currently regulation restricting movement of firewood to protect forests in un-infested areas. Mulch is considered safe for use as it is finely shredded and chipped.

New York State Firewood Regulations



The rules laid out below pertain to all species of wood, cut or not cut, split or not split, that is destined for use as fuel. Logs would only be subject to the regulation if their intended use is as firewood. More information is available on the [DEC website](#).

- Untreated firewood may not be imported into NY from any other state or country.

- Untreated firewood grown in NY may not be transported more than 50 miles (linear distance) from its source or origin unless it has been heat-treated to 71°C (160° F) for 75 minutes.

When transporting firewood, the following documentation is required:

- If transporting untreated firewood cut for personal use (i.e. not for sale) you must fill out a Self-Issued Certificate of Origin (PDF).
- If purchasing and transporting untreated firewood, it must have a receipt or label that identifies the firewood source. NOTE! Source is sometimes, but not always, the same as where it was purchased. Consumers need to use the source to determine how far the firewood may be transported.
- If purchasing and transporting heat-treated firewood, it must have a receipt or label that says, "New York Approved Heat-Treated Firewood/Pest Free". This is the producers' declaration that the firewood meets New York's heat-treatment requirements. Most "kiln-drying" processes meet the standard, but not all, so it is important to look for the appropriate label. Heat-treated firewood may be moved unrestricted.

One Last Hope

The USDA Forest Service is funding a project to breed borer-resistant ash trees by finding "lingering ash": mature, native, healthy, untreated ash trees found in the same area where most ash trees have been killed. By growing ash trees from twig samples taken from lingering ash, they have created EAB-resistant trees within two generations, which is promising for ash conservation. Click [HERE](#) for more on this project.

Ash Tree Identification:

- Compound leaves with 5-11 leaflets.

- Leaflet stems are oppositely branched.
- Leaflet margins may be toothed or smooth.
- Mature tree bark grows in tight diamond patterns.
- Ash tree seeds hang loosely on twigs through the fall and early winter.



Agriculture Awareness

From the Agricultural Advisory Committee

Farm Facts

120 YEARS AGO

In 1900 the average US farmer fed 15 people, and 40% of the population was involved in farming.

TODAY